

DECLARE HIS WONDERS AMONG ALL PEOPLE.—Ps. xcvi. 3.

DESCRIPTION  
OF  
Banvard's Pilgrimage  
TO THE  
HOLY LAND.



"MR. BANVARD IS THE ORIGINAL PROJECTOR OF THE ENORMOUS PAINTINGS OF THIS CLASS."  
EDWARD EVERETT.

NOW EXHIBITING.  
LONDON.  
1852.



DESCRIPTION  
OF  
Banbard's Great Pictures  
OF  
JERUSALEM  
AND  
THE HOLY LAND;

PAINTED FROM AUTHENTIC DRAWINGS MADE UPON THE SPOT,  
DURING AN EXTENSIVE JOURNEY, UNDERTAKEN  
EXPRESSLY FOR THE WORK,  
IN FOUR IMMENSE VOLUMES;

Presenting in Minute Detail

The Sacred Localities; the Cities, Mountains, Plains and  
Rivers; celebrated in Scriptural History.

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"The country which God especially set apart for his great designs, and which, in consequence, contains no spot of ground on which some commissioned Angel has not trod, or which does not suggest some incident in the history of Patriarch, Prophet, Apostle or King—this country must needs excite peculiar interest."—KITTO.

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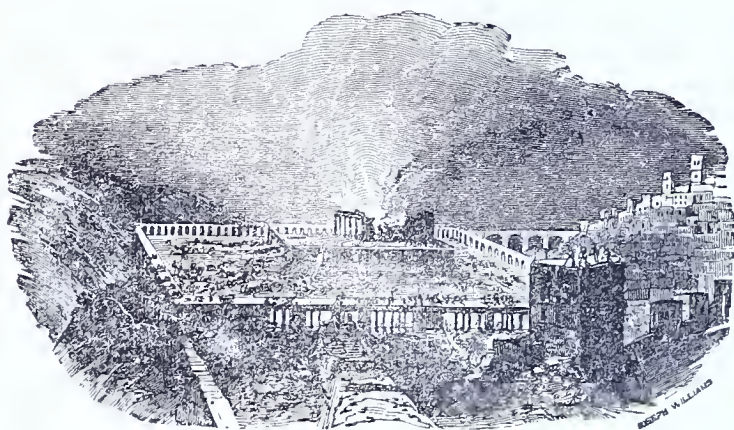


ENCAMPING IN HOLY LAND.

## Palestine.

PALESTINE is perhaps the most interesting country in the world, for the startling vicissitudes of its early fortunes, the luster of its ancient glories, and its connection with scriptural history; no description of any other country can equal in interest that of the Holy Land—the land of the gospel, religion, and chivalry. The remembrance of its past is ever cherished with sentiments of profound affection and reverence, alike, by the Christian, Mohammedan, and Jew. Therefore, what ever concerns this most remarkable country is listened to with lively interest. All the beauty and variety of landscape is spread over its surface as lavishly as when seen by the patriarchs and apostles: the Jordan still gives back as clear an image, as when it reflected the passing ark, or the camel hair raiment of John the Baptist. Carmel, Tabor, and the mountains which lie “round about Jerusalem,” are as lovely as when their beauty was the theme of David, and Zion ech-

oed to his harp-string and song. It has been the theater of the most brilliant exploits of the Jewish, Roman and Saracenic arms, and even in our own day, her hoary hills and fertile plains are still ensanguined by the contentions of modern nations. At every step the traveler treads on the remains of fallen cities, once mighty in the history of the country, and upon monuments of industry and art, which testify the vast population, the wealth and magnificence of the land in days gone by. The variety and beauty of its climate, its luxuriant fertility, with its advantageous position in the very heart of the old world, rendered it the chosen abode of early commerce and civilization; but these very advantages only tended to excite the cupidity and ambition of conquerors, which brought down on this devoted country so often the desolating ravages of war.



SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

Here, commerce and navigation began their humanizing career, and a multitude of useful arts and discoveries originated; here, was the birth of our religion—and here, infinitely more momentous to the Christian, were prepared and consummated those stupendous events, on which he rests his hopes for eternity.

Palestine during different ages has been known under various names. After their return from captivity, the

Jews first called their country the Holy Land, which title it generally bears, though Palestine may be regarded as the proper geographical name of the country, and is first mentioned by Moses, being a corruption of the word Philistines, that nation having once possessed a large portion of the territory.

At the present day, Palestine has no political boundaries; but its borders are assumed to be the mountains of Lebanon on the north; the Arabian desert, which separates it from Egypt, on the south; the Jordan on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west—being a small territory of Asia, and subdivision of Syria.

## Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

THE Church of the Holy Sepulcher is the most interesting object within the city, and hither the devout pilgrim first directs his steps on entering the holy gates. It is situated in the north-western quarter, inclosed by the buildings of Latin and Greek convents, and is approached through winding streets and narrow bazaars. It is perhaps the most venerable Christian edifice in the world. The first building erected upon these sacred localities was during the reign of the Christian emperor Constantine, in the fourth century, and is attributed to his mother the pious Helena, but had little resemblance to the structure that exists at the present day.

It is related by several writers of early church history, that Helena, the mother of Constantine, was from the first instigated by a strong desire to search out and discover the Holy Sepulcher and the sacred cross upon which the Saviour had suffered. For this purpose she repaired to Jerusalem, where she inquired diligently of the inhabitants. Her search was long, difficult and uncertain, in consequence of the means taken by the heathens to obliterate the localities from the remembrance of the Christians, having erected pagan idols upon the most sacred localities in the city, and even forbidding the name of Jerusalem itself to be uttered, naming the city Aelia in its stead. But the very means taken to destroy the knowledge of these holy places only perpetuated them in the memory of the persecuted Christians, who yet remembered that the goddess Venus on Calvary's height still marked the rock upon which the Saviour suffered.

The entrance fronts an open square court, formerly separated from the street by a portico or row of columns, the bases of which remain. This is a kind of market square and filled by venders of holy relics, such as crosses, rosaries, beads, amulets, &c. Here can be seen pilgrims from all parts of the world, purchasing mementos of their visit, which they bear away with them to their distant homes. The façade of the building presents a venerable appearance and is of pointed Gothic architecture. There were formerly two entrances, one of which is now walled up.



HALT OF THE CARAVAN.

## Itinerary.

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### MOUNT LEBANON.

THE first land descried by travelers approaching the Holy Land from the west, is Mount Lebanon, and this I deemed the most appropriate point to commence our pilgrimage.

### THE RUINS OF BAALBEC.

These beautiful ruins lie at the foot of Mount Lebanon, in Cælo Syria, and are the most beautiful Corinthian ruins extant.

### BEYROOT.

The principal seaport of Palestine. It is the Beyritus of the ancients.

### COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON.

Tyre is seen on the low peninsula projecting into the sea on the right, the sea beating against its broken walls, which contain naught but a wretched village, and is liter-

ally "a place to spread nets upon." The Scriptural account of the magnificence and wealth of ancient Tyre is fully borne out by the profane writers, who highly extol its beauty and riches; but now, "what city is like Tyre, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?" (See Ezekiel XXVI., XXVII., XXVIII.)

#### NAZARETH.

We now enter ancient Galilee by the Vale of Nazareth. As we approach the city we pass near the FOUNTAIN OF THE VIRGIN, pointed out as the source where the Virgin Mary poured her water for domestic purposes. A number of Nazarene females in their picturesque costumes can be seen bearing away their well filled jars. The population is estimated by Abu Nasir, an intelligent Arab Christian, a resident, to be about three thousand, principally Latin and Greek Christians.

Here were passed the youthful days of Jesus, and the house of Joseph and Mary where he dwelt, is pointed out.

Immediately in front, is the Greek Church of the Annunciation, erected upon the spot where the angel Gabriel notified the Virgin Mary of the birth of Christ.

In the distance, beyond the plains of Jezreel, is seen

#### MOUNT CARMEL.

The "excellency of Carmel" is particularly described in Holy Writ. Along its northern side near the foot of the mountain ridge, flows "that ancient river, the river Kishon." Here the prophet Elijah dwelt long upon the sacred mountain.

#### SEA OF GALILEE.

Also called the Lake of Tiberias. This is a beautiful sheet of water, and was often traversed by Jesus during his ministry to the numerous cities and villages by which it was formerly surrounded. But now the shores are al-

most desolate, and the only city upon its banks is Tiberias, which is seen in the painting, a wretched, half-ruined town, the principal inhabitants of which are Jews. Upon the lake and its shores several of the miracles of Christ were performed. I saw only one small boat upon the waters, although in Bible times large fleets hovered over its surface.

On the western border of the lake beyond Tiberias was situated ancient Magdala, the birthplace of Mary Magdalen, the site still indicated in the wretched village of Migdal. Beyond this again, Safed, the "city built upon a hill," as referred to by the Saviour, can be seen on a high elevation, while in the extreme distance

#### MOUNT HERMON

Rears aloft its majestic head against the skies, white with eternal snows, one of the loftiest mountains in Palestine.

#### MOUNT TABOR

Next commands our admiration, rising majestically in uniform swell gracefully to the heavens. This is supposed to be the mount of transfiguration, the "high mountain apart" where Christ led up his disciples to be transfigured before them. Formerly, there was a fortified town upon the mountain, the remains of which are still to be seen. The view from the summit is indescribably magnificent, overlooking the great plain of Jezreel and surrounding mountains as far as the sea. The Latin and Greek churches of Nazareth repair here once or twice a year and say mass upon the mountain top. Dr. Robinson\* (who is acknowledged by European critics to be "the most trustworthy writer upon Palestine") estimates the height at only a thousand feet. In viewing it from the plain be-

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\* The learned doctor has been again to the Holy Land making further researches, and Scriptural literature will no doubt receive further valuable additions from his experienced and gifted pen.

neath I judged it to be somewhat higher. The wandering Bedouin Arabs hover within its shade; an encampment of them can be seen in the foreground of the view.

#### PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

This great plain is famous in many of the most memorable parts of the history of the Old Testament—famous during the bloody era of the crusaders, and famous in our own time for the gallant resistance of General Kleber, who, with but fifteen hundred men, withstood the attack of the entire Syrian army, amounting to twenty-five thousand, from sunrise till midday. Napoleon arrived from Nazareth with six hundred men, when the Syrians were put to flight, leaving several thousand dead upon the field. It was over this plain that Jehu was seen “driving furiously.” (I. and II. Kings, xxi. & ix.) At the foot of the hill which is seen on the right, which is the hill of JEZREEL, is still the fountain flowing toward the Jordan, where the Israelites pitched their tents, as mentioned in the book of Samuel, and where in the time of the Crusades the Christian and Saracen hosts alternately encamped. Here also Deborah led out the hosts of Israel and overcame Sisera. The small village of *Daboura* still memorizes the event. (Judges iv. 14.)

#### MOUNTAINS OF GILBOA.

These are memorable as the scene of Saul’s defeat by the Philistines, and where he and Jonathan with his other sons fell in battle. (I. Samuel xxxi.) Behind the high mountain with the welley at its summit, (the tomb of a Mohammedan saint,) which is known as the Lesser Herman, lie the villages of Nain and Endor. The former is where Jesus restored the widow’s son; the latter where Saul consulted the woman with the familiar spirit previous to his fall.

## CITY OF GENIN.

This is a picturesquely situated town at the commencement of the great plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, as you approach Galilee from Samaria. It has been supposed by some to be the Jezreel of the Scriptures. This is where "the Midianites and Amalekites and the children of the East were gathered together," when "the spirit of the Lord came on Gideon." (Judges, chap. vi.) Beyond the mountains which rise back of Genin is situated Beth-Shan, (now Beisun,) where the bodies of King Saul and his three sons were "fastened to the wall." (I. Samuel, chap. xxxi.)

One of the sources of "that ancient river, the river Kishon," which swept away the army of Sisera, flows hence through the plain of Esdraelon.

## MOUNTS GERIZIM AND EBAL.

The mountains of Blessing and Cursing rise boldly from the plain not more than a quarter of a mile apart. Gerizim is the southernmost and is said by tradition to be the mountain on which the patriarch Abraham erected his altar for the sacrifice of his son Isaac; and here the children of Israel were commanded to set up their altar, and the blessings of the law were pronounced with a loud voice from Gerizim and its curses from Ebal. (Deut. xxvii. 1-13.) Here is one of the most interesting relics of ancient patriarchal times, the identity of which can not be doubted—the well of Jacob, where Jesus conversed with the woman of Samaria. It is seen immediately in the fore-ground of the view—around it some dancing Derwishes are performing their Zekirs or sacred dances. To the right, near the foot of Ebal, is seen a small Turkish building; this contains the tomb of Joseph, whose bones were brought up out of Egypt by the Israelites.

## GIBEON.

Here transpired one of the most stupendous events recorded in the Old Testament, the fall of the Amorites, and where Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still. The cave is still shown behind Gibeon where the five kings secreted themselves. (Joshua x.)

## THE RIVER JORDAN.

This ever memorable stream rises near Mount Hermon, runs through El-Ghor, a deep valley, and is lost in the Dead Sea. Its banks are bordered by cane-brakes and deep tangled thickets, affording a secluded and secure retreat to the numerous predatory Bedouins who make frequent attacks upon the defenseless peasants. The river has no great breadth, but is deep and rapid, having a current of about five miles an hour.

The spot where St. John baptized Christ is pointed out, which is the same as represented in the picture, and is also supposed to be the place where the children of Israel crossed over into the Promised Land.

## PLAIN OF JERICHO.

A large square tower is pointed out as being upon the site of the ancient "City of Palms." This however is doubtful. GILGAL must have been located somewhere in the plain before us, but its position is not to be found.

## MOUNTS NEBO AND PISGAH.

Seen in the distance on the opposite side of the Jordan. These are the mountains whence Moses beheld the Land of Promise, and rise above the plains of Moab. (Deut. xxxii.)

## DEAD SEA.

This is the most remarkable body of water upon the earth, of which much has been written. It is surrounded by barren, precipitous cliffs, in a region extremely unhealthy, and no inhabitants dwell upon its borders. Here the doomed cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, were destroyed by fire from Heaven. In the Bible it is called the Salt Sea, and the Sea of the Plain; by the Greek and Romans the Lake of Asphaltites, from the quantity of asphaltum found along its shores. The native Arabs call it the Bahr Lut, (the sea of Lot.) It is the lowest known spot on the earth's surface, being 1,300 feet below the level of the sea. Its gravity when compared to pure water is as three to two, occasioned by the quantity of salts held in solution; consequently it is very buoyant and I found it impossible to sink in it while bathing, although I made several essays. The water is extremely bitter.

## BETHANY AND ROAD TO JERICHO.

This road is as unsafe at the present day as of old when Christ made its dangers the subject of a parable. Robberies and murders frequently occur: hence it is called the Bloody Way.

Bethany is now an insignificant village lying behind the Mount of Olives, containing but a few ruined houses. Here Jesus frequently resided with his friends Lazarus, Mary and Martha, whom he loved. The tomb of Lazarus is still seen.

## BETHLEHEM.

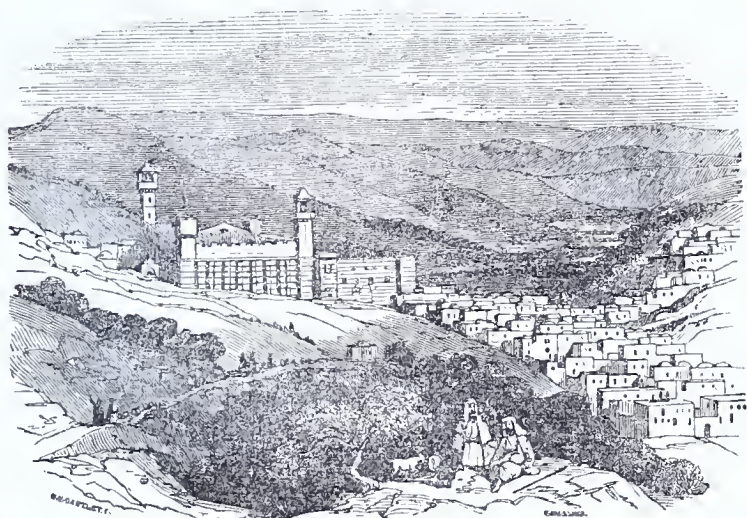
The birthplace of Jesus Christ is beautifully situated on the side of a steep hill overhanging a lovely valley. It is mostly inhabited by Latin and Greek Christians, but few Mohanmedans and no Jews.

The large fortified convent on the brow of the hill is

held and occupied in common by the Latin and Greeks, and contains within its walls the birthplace of our Saviour. In the lovely and romantic vale below Bethlehem, is said to be the place where the shepherds watching their flocks by night were visited by the angels announcing the glad tidings of the Saviour's birth. Here also were the fields of Boaz in which the beautiful Ruth gleaned.

#### SHRINE OF THE NATIVITY. (INTERIOR.)

This is an excavation in the limestone rock immediately beneath the church and is illuminated night and day with numerous massive silver lamps, the votive gifts of various European princes. To the left is a semicircular recess in which is a silver star with brilliant rays, marking the spot where the star rested which guided the Magi, and where the Saviour was born. Opposite, a smaller recess, in which three lamps are suspended, indicates the place of the manger in which the infant Saviour was laid; the manger itself having been removed to Rome by Pope Sixtus V., and is now in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Helena the mother of Constantine erected the church, it is said, after her son's conversion to Christianity.



SYRIAN VILLAGE.

## VALLEY OF THE BROOK KIDRON.

This commences on the north-eastern side of Jerusalem and runs south into the valley of Jehosaphat. The Mohammedan cemetery which lies on this side of Jerusalem, is seen under the moon's pale light.

## TOMB OF THE VIRGIN

Is seen here with its curious Gothic front. It is excavated in the limestone rock and contains several chambers with altars, where mass is performed by the monks. Immediately opposite are the sacred shades of

## THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

Here are eight venerable olive-trees of great antiquity, surrounded by a wall. The tree in the north-eastern part of the inclosure is said to be the one under which the soldiers seized Jesus. Outside of the inclosure to the south, a narrow strip is walled off, called the Terra-Damnata, (accursed ground,) where Judas betrayed his Master with a kiss.

## THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

This sacred mountain rises boldly to the east of Jerusalem, the summit being "a Sabbath day's journey" from the city, and is 2,400 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. It commands a magnificent prospect of the entire city and surrounding region, which lie spread out before the eye like a map. The olives still grow as fruitfully upon its side as of old, and many of the sacred localities commemorated in the life of our Saviour are still preserved by the monks on its venerable declivities.

An octagonal Turkish structure inclosed within the walls of a small mosque contains the last footprint of Christ upon earth. It is an impression in the limestone rock and much worn by the kissing of pilgrims. Although within a

Mohammedan mosque the Christians are allowed to worship here, and the Latin and Greek friars often celebrate mass, particularly on the Ascension day, as it is held to be the spot where Christ ascended into Heaven.

#### VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT.

This deep sepulchral vale runs close under the eastern walls of the city and contains a number of remarkable tombs excavated in the rock. Among them are the tombs of Absalom, St. James, Jehoshaphat, and Zaccharias, all of which are seen in detail in the view. Here is also the CEMETERY OF THE JEWS.

#### VILLAGE OF SILOAM.

This singular village is built on the precipitous side of the Mount of Olives overhanging the valley of Jehoshaphat, among the ancient tombs which are here numerous cut in the cliff, and which serve as abodes to the Arabs who inhabit the village.

In the foreground are some Syrian girls bearing away the waters from the celebrated POOL OF SILOAM.

#### MOUNT OF OFFENSE.

This name is given to the southern extremity of the Mount of Olives, from the fact that Solomon here erected his idolatrous temples to Chemosh and Molech. He also built here a palace for his 700 wives. (I. Kings xi.)

#### VALLEY OF HINNOM.

Here is Tophet where the ancient Jews practiced the horrid rites of Baal and Moloch, and "burned their sons and daughters in the fire." (II. Kings xviii.; Jer. vii.) Many tombs are here cut in the rock like those in the valley just passed. Just above was the Potters' field; a square stone building overhanging the valley is the charnel house.

## POOL OF GIHON.

This pool is now dry and not used. It lies on the western side of Jerusalem and the road to Bethlehem passes near it. This is where Solomon was anointed king. (1. Kings i. 33, 38.)

## CITY OF JERUSALEM.

The view is taken from the summit of Mount Olivet, near where Christ is said to have ascended into heaven, and from its elevated position is most comprehensive and interesting. The city is built upon three hills, Moriah, Zion, and Aera, and is but a remnant of "the city beloved by God," yet is still a considerable place. It has the appearance of being a large and strongly fortified town, but within its gates nothing but ruin and wretchedness meet the eye, and a small battery would soon reduce its walls level with earth. It is supposed to have been founded by Melchisedek about two thousand years before the birth of Christ. The population has been variously stated from 10,000 to 40,000.

## TOMBS OF THE KINGS.

A very remarkable and the most extensive excavation about the city. Of late the tradition of its being the burial place of the kings of Judah has been doubted, and it is supposed to be that of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, and mentioned by Josephus.

## WALLS OF JERUSALEM,

We now enter the sacred precincts of the Holy City, and can say with the Psalmist, "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." We enter by the Damaseus gate, the most imposing of all the portals of the city. From the Mohammedan cemetery to this place we have performed the entire circuit of Jerusalem. The inscription

over the gate informs us that the present walls were built by Sultan Suleiman in the Hegira 948 (A. D. 1542.) This gate is called by the natives Bab-el-Amud.



WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

#### JEWS' PLACE OF WAILING.

The Jews of the city assemble here on their Sabbath and lament over their fallen city. The largest stones are undoubtedly the remains of the ancient temple walls which surrounded the cloisters.

#### THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM.

These are very narrow and lined with ruined buildings and walls. The most important street is the VIA DOLO-RASA, over which spans a dilapidated arch. This is the

#### ARCH OF THE ECCE HOMO,

Where Pontius Pilate led out Jesus and said to the multitude "Behold the man."

## CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER. (EXTERIOR.)

'This is the most remarkable Christian building in the world, erected over the tomb of Christ and containing numerous sacred localities beneath its venerable roof, among which is the thrice sacred

## MOUNT CALVARY.



SAND STORM.

## ADVENTURES OF THE ARTIST.

[NOTE. In answer to many inquiries respecting the past history of the artist which have been made by those who have viewed his painting, at the suggestion of a number of his friends, the following sketch of his adventures is compiled from Howitt's Journal, London, Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, and Morris and Willis's Home Journal, New York.]

There was a young lad of fifteen, a fatherless, moneyless youth, to whom there came a very extraordinary idea, as he was floating for the first time down the noble Mississippi. He had read in some foreign journal that America could boast the most picturesque and magnificent scenery in the world, but that she had not yet produced an artist capable of delineating it. On this thought he pondered and pondered till his brain began to whirl; and as he glided along on the smooth surface of the river, gazing with wonder and delight upon the ever varied and beautiful shores, the boy resolved within himself that he would take away the reproach from his country,—that *he* would paint the beauties and sublimities of his native land.

Some years passed away, and still JOHN BANVARD,—for that was his name,—dreamed of being a painter. What he was in his waking, working moments, we do not know; but, at all events, he found time to turn over and over again the great thought that haunted him, till at length, ere he had attained the age of manhood, it assumed a distinct and tangible shape in his mind, and he devoted himself to its realization. There mingled no idea of profit with his ambition, and, indeed, strange to say, we can learn nothing of any aspirations he may have felt after artistical excellence. His grand object, as he himself informs us, was to produce for his country *the largest painting in the world*. He determined to paint a picture of the beautiful scenery of the Mississippi, which should be as superior to all others. in point of *size*, as that prodigious river is superior to the

streamlets of Europe,—a gigantic idea! which seems truly kindred to the illimitable forests and vast extent of his native land.

We will now say something of his eventful and romantic life, which, with its hardships, disappointments, and privations, had fitted him for the accomplishment of his herculean undertaking. He was born in the city of New York, where he received a good education, and is descended from an old French family. His grandfather was driven out of France by the bloody sword of persecution during one of the revolutions of the country, and fled to Amsterdam, in Holland. From thence he sailed to America, bringing with him little else but the heraldic honors of his family, for the Bon Verds (corrupted by the *patois* of the country to Banvard) were of highly respectable lineage. The coat of arms patented the family by the government, with the large antique silver seal, is now in possession of the Rev. Joseph Banvard, brother to John, pastor of the Harvard Street Church, Boston. Our hero showed the bent of his genius at a very early age. Being of delicate health in childhood, he was unable to enjoy the active, out-door sports of other boys, and, accordingly, he amused himself by drawing and painting, for which he exhibited decided talents, by becoming quite an accomplished draughtsman while yet a mere lad.

While his more favoured brothers were in the open air at play, he sometimes would be in his room projecting some instrument of natural science,—a camera obscura, or solar microscope. He once came very near losing his eye-sight, by the explosion of a glass receiver, in which he was collecting hydrogen gas. His room was quite a laboratory and museum. He constructed a respectable diorama of the sea, having moving boats, fish, and a naval engagement. He saved the pennies that were given him, not spending them in toys or sweetmeats, as most youths would, and bought some types for a wooden printing press, of his own construction, and printed some handbills for his juvenile exhibitions. We have one of

them now in our possession, and it is quite a genteel specimen of typography. The child was truly the father of the man in this, as in so many other cases, but he had much to pass through before the promise of the boy could be developed in the accomplishments of the man, as the sequel will show.

Young Banvard was intimate with Woodworth, the poet, the author of the "Old Oaken Bucket," whose family were neighbours to his father. He evinced a great taste for poetry, at which he early began to try his versatile genius. He wrote some very pretty verses when he was about nine years of age. He has continued occasionally to amuse his leisure hours in this way, up to the present time, and several of his poetical productions have recently appeared in the city papers. His poem of the White Fawn, which he recites to his audiences, in illustration of a scene in his beautiful picture, certainly stamps him a poet of no ordinary abilities.

When Banvard was about fifteen years of age, his family met with a severe reverse of fortune. His father lived just long enough to see his property, collected by frugal industry and perseverance, swept away from him by the mismanagement of an indiscreet partner, and his family turned houseless upon a pitiless world. John then went to the West, poor and friendless, and far away from his mother, brother and sisters, and those he held dear. He arrived at Louisville, Kentucky, sought employment, and procured a situation in a drug store; but this did not suit his taste. Instead of making pills, his employer would often find him with a piece of chalk, or coal, sketching the likenesses of his fellow clerks upon the walls of the rooms, where they were putting up medicines. His employer told him he thought he could make better likenesses than he could pills. John thought so too, and so "threw physic to the dogs," and left the druggist.

We next find him engaged in his favourite employment of painting—he having made an engagement to ornament and decorate a public garden. But this concern soon failed, and left him without money or employment. At this time he was

about sixteen years old. Our hero, nothing daunted, by persevering labour obtained a little money, engaged a room, and pursued the business of painting for himself. The day had not arrived for success in his chosen pursuit ; so being fond of adventure, he started down the river with some young men of his acquaintance, to seek anew his fortune.

When they had reached the mouth of the Saline river, they met with a disaster which had well nigh proved fatal to the young artist. The river was lashed by a terrific storm ; the night was dark ; the boat broke loose from its moorings. By great exertions of all hands on board, in pumping and bailing all night, they succeeded in keeping the craft afloat, and made a safe landing. During this perilous night, our young adventurer, at the hazard of his own life, saved the life of one of his comrades who fell overboard. When day broke they discovered a stock-boat but a few yards below them, whose proximity they had not observed during the night, from the noise of the storm. It was an ill-fated night for the stock-boat. It was sunk, all the stock was drowned, and the men were found sitting on the bank, nearly frozen, whom the more fortunate party generously relieved. A large number of boats met with a similar fate with the stock-boat, on that fatal night.

The next we find of Banvard, is in the village of New Harmony, on the Wabash river, where, in company with three or four other young men, he “ got up ” some dioramic paintings, fitted them up for public exhibition, in a flat boat, which they built for the purpose, and started off down the Wabash, with the intention of “ coasting ” that river into the Ohio, and so down the Mississippi to New Orleans ; thus exhibiting to the sparse population of the wilderness, specimens of the fine arts, at the same time replenishing their exhausted funds. This proved to be a very unfortunate speculation. The capital of the company gave out before they were able to complete their plans, and they left port with their boat in an unfinished condition, calculating to finish it with their

first proceeds, they having invested their last few dimes in a supply of bacon, corn, meal, and potatoes; but fate conspired against them. The river was low, and none of them had ever descended the Wabash; consequently they were ignorant of the channel, lodged on the sand bars, and hung on the snags, until they exhausted their scanty supply of provisions. They at length, found themselves fast on a sand bar, and down to their last peck of potatoes at the same time. They laboured hard all day to get out of this predicament, but without success; and having roasted their last potatoes, they went to bed, or rather to bench, for their money gave out before they had procured bedding, and they had to content themselves with the softest plank of their seats for their slumbers. Next morning they were up before the sun, with their spirits refreshed by a night's repose; but without any breakfast, they jumped into the water, and with their rails went stoutly to work again, to force their boat over the bar. Over exertion, together with being in the water too long without food, brought a severe fit of ague upon Banvard. The bar upon which they were fast, was called the "Bone Bank" bar, as, immediately opposite, on the shore, the bank of the river was full of organic remains. Some of the large bones were then protruding out of the side of the bank in full view. As Banvard lay on the soft sand of the bar, it being more comfortable than the hard plank of the boat, his head burning with the fever and his limbs racked with pain, he looked at these gloomy relics of an antediluvian race, and felt as though his bones would soon be laid with them. But at sunset the rest of the company got the boat over the bar, took Banvard aboard, and landed in the woods, all nearly exhausted. Food was as scarce here as it was upon the bar, and all hands went supperless to bed. Next morning they started early, not intent on exhibiting specimens of the fine arts, but on obtaining something to eat, as by this time they were nearly half starved. But the contrary winds landed their luckless craft on Wabash Island, which was uninhabited. Here fortunately, they found some pawpaws, and they all

feasted voraciously on them, except Banvard, who was too sick to eat anything, and who lay upon one of the benches, burning with a violent fever. Next day they sent their hand-bills down to the village of Shawneetown, which was in sight, about seven miles ahead, informing the inhabitants that something would be "exhibited" in the dioramic line that evening, at their wharf; and so there was; for as the company approached the wharf with their boat, no doubt with high expectations of a good supper, they observed a large audience awaiting their arrival. But the exhibition turned out different from what was expected. The boat lodged on a ledge of rocks about half a cable's length from the shore. The men from the boat got out a line to the people on the wharf, who pulled with the same eagerness that the half-starved company on board pushed and pried with their poles. But fate, regardless of the philosophy of action and reaction, as well as of the interests of the fine arts at Shawneetown, held the boat fast, and the audience went away without a sight of the paintings, and the artists to sleep again without a supper. That night the swells from a passing steamer lifted the boat from the rocks, and set it afloat down the river; and when those on board awoke in the morning, they found themselves hard aground again on the Cincinnati bar, about eight miles below Shawneetown. The boat was got off with but little trouble, and they landed in a settlement. Here they were very liberal in their terms, as money was scarce, and they wanted to make sure of something to eat. A bushel of potatoes, a fowl, or a dozen of eggs, were good for an admission to their interesting exhibition. That night, after they got through exhibiting their paintings, they had a luxurious supper. Fasting so long, appeared to have done Banvard some good, for it starved the fever out of him; he found, as we often do, that adversity has its blessings, and in a few days he was entirely well.

The adventurers continued on with their boat, stopping at the settlements along the shore, and "astonishing the natives" with their dioramas. The boat was not very large, and if the

audience collected too much on one side, the water would intrude over their low gunwales into the exhibition room. This kept the company, by turns, in the un-artist-like employment of pumping, to keep the boat from sinking. Sometimes the swells from a passing steamer would cause the water to rush through the cracks of the weather-boarding, and give the audience a bathing. Banvard says they made no extra charge for this part of the exhibition, although it was not mentioned in the programme.

Money being scarce, they were compelled to receive "truck and trade" for admissions, such as onions, potatoes, eggs, et cetera. It was no unusual thing to see a family coming to witness the "show boat," the father with a bushel of potatoes, the mother with a fowl, and the children with a pumpkin a-piece, for their admission fees. On a certain night, while they were exhibiting, some rogue let the boat loose, and it drifted off several miles down the stream with the unconscious spectators, who were landed in a thick cane brake, about two miles below. They were obliged to make their way home as best they could.

At Plumb point the boat was attacked by a party of the Murell robbers, a large organized banditti, who infested the country for miles around; and here our hero came near losing his life. Several pistol shots were fired at him, but being in the dark, none of them took effect, although several lodged in the deck of the boat, within a few inches of him. After a desperate resistance, during which one of the robbers was shot, the boat was rescued. During the encounter, one of the company received a severe wound in the arm from a bowie knife, but the rest escaped unhurt. Mr. Banvard continued with the boat until it arrived at the Grand Gulf, where he obtained a commission to paint some views. He had found the receipts of the floating expedition to be more potatoes than dimes, more eggs than dollars, so he sold out his interest, and left. We know nothing further of this expedition, but Banvard seems to have been satisfied with floating dioramas.

After this, he engaged in painting at New Orleans, Natchez,

and subsequently at Cincinnati and Louisville, and was liberally rewarded. Not content, however, he executed a very fine panorama of the city of Venice, and exhibited it in the West with considerable success. He finally lost this painting by the sinking of a steamer, upon which it was being transported to the city of Nashville. Having accumulated, by his art, a little capital, we next find him at St. Louis, as the proprietor of the St. Louis museum, which he had purchased. But here fate frowned again upon his efforts. He remained in St. Louis just long enough to lose all he had previously earned, and then left for Cincinnati, where he fared little better. He then procured a small boat, and started down the Ohio river without a dime, and living several days upon nuts, which he collected from the woods. His next stopping place was a small town, where he did some painting, and sold a revolving pistol, for which he had given twelve dollars in St. Louis, for twenty-five dollars. With this capital he bought a larger boat, got some produce aboard, which he retailed out along shore; then sold his concern for fifty dollars. Having now a little capital, the young artist made several very successful speculations, and managed to make, during this Quixotic expedition, several thousand dollars. With the capital thus accumulated, he commenced his grand project of painting the Panorama of the Mississippi.

For this purpose, he procured a small skiff, and descended the river to make the necessary drawings, in the spring of 1840, and the first sketch was made just before he became of age. Had he been aware, when he commenced the undertaking, of the vast amount of labour it required, he would have shrunk from the task in dismay; but having commenced the work, he was determined to proceed, being spurred on to its completion, perhaps, by the doubts of some of his friends, to whom he communicated his project, as to its practicability. The idea of gain never entered his mind when he commenced the undertaking, but he was actuated by a patriotic and honourable ambition, that he should produce the *largest painting* in the world.

One of the greatest difficulties he encountered, was the preparatory labour he had to undergo in making the necessary drawings. For this purpose he had to travel thousands of miles alone in an open skiff, crossing and recrossing the rapid stream, in many places over two miles in breadth, to select proper points of sight, from which to take his sketch; his hands became hardened with constantly plying the oar, and his skin as tawny as an Indian's, from exposure to the rays of the sun and the vicissitudes of the weather. He would be weeks together without speaking to a human being, having no other company than his rifle, which furnished him with his meat from the game of the woods or the fowls of the river. When the sun began to sink behind the lofty bluffs, and evening to approach, he would select some secluded sandy cove, overshadowed by the lofty cotton wood, draw out his skiff from the water, and repair to the woods to hunt his supper. Having killed his game, he would return, dress, cook, and from some fallen log would eat it with his biscuit, with no other beverage than the wholesome water of the noble river that glided by him. Having finished his lonely meal, he would roll himself in his blanket, creep under his frail skiff, which he turned over, to shield him from the night dews, and with his portfolio of drawings for his pillow, and the sand of the bar for his bed, would sleep soundly till the morning; when he would arise from his lowly couch, eat his breakfast before the rays of the rising sun had dispersed the humid mist from the surface of the river,—then would start fresh to his task again. In this way he spent over four hundred days, making the preparatory drawings. Several nights during the time, he was compelled to creep from under his skiff, where he slept, and sit all night on a log, and breast the pelting storm, through fear that the banks of the river would cave upon him, and to escape the falling trees. During this time, he pulled his little skiff more than two thousand miles. In the latter part of the summer he reached New Orleans. The yellow fever was raging in the city, but, unmindful of that, he made his drawing of the

place. The sun the while was so intensely hot, that his skin became so burned, that it peeled from off the back of his hands, and from his face. His eyes became inflamed, by such constant and extraordinary efforts, from which unhappy effects he has not recovered to this day. His drawings completed, he erected a building at Louisville, Kentucky, to transfer them to the canvas. His object in painting his picture in the West was to exhibit it to, and procure testimonials from, those who were best calculated to judge of its fidelity,—the practical river men; and he has procured the names of nearly all the principal captains and pilots navigating the Mississippi, freely testifying to the correctness of the scenery.

The following interesting letter from S. Woodworth, an officer of the United States navy, who passed through Louisville, bearer of despatches to Oregon and California, to his friend, General Morris, at New York, and published in the “Home Journal” of that city, gives a graphic description of the artist, as he appeared at work upon his great painting.

ST. LOUIS, April 13, 1846.

“MY DEAR GENERAL:—Here I am, in this beautiful city of St. Louis, and thus far ‘on my winding way’ to Oregon and California. In coming down the Ohio, our boat being of the larger class, and the river at a ‘low stage,’ we were detained several hours at Louisville, and I took advantage of the detention to pay a visit to an old school-mate of mine, one of the master spirits of the age. I mean Banvard, the artist, who is engaged in the herculean task of painting a panorama of the Mississippi river, upon more than *three miles of canvas!*—truthfully depicting a range of scenery of upwards of two thousand miles in extent. In company with a travelling acquaintance, an English gentleman, I called at the artist’s studio, an immense wooden building, constructed expressly for the purpose, at the extreme outskirts of the city. After knocking several times, I at length succeeded in making myself heard, when the artist himself, in his working cap and blouse, palette and pencil

in hand, came to the door to admit us. He did not at first recognise me, but when I mentioned my name, he dropped both palette and pencil, and clasped me in his arms, so delighted was he to see me, after a separation of sixteen years.

“My fellow-traveller was quite astonished at this sudden manifestation, for I had not informed him of our previous intimacy, but had merely invited him to accompany me to see in progress this wonder of the world, that is to be, this leviathan panorama. Banvard immediately conducted us into the interior of the building. He said he had selected the site for his building, far removed from the noise and bustle of the town, that he might apply himself more closely and uninterruptedly to his labour, and be free from the intrusion of visitors. Within the studio, all seemed chaos and confusion, but the life-like and natural appearance of a portion of his great picture, displayed on one of the walls in a yet unfinished state. Here and there were scattered about the floor, piles of his original sketches, bales of canvas, and heaps of boxes. Paint-pots, brushes, jars and kegs were strewed about, without order or arrangement, while along one of the walls several large cases were piled, containing rolls of finished sections of the painting. On the opposite wall was spread a canvas, extending its whole length, upon which the artist was then at work. A portion of this canvas was wound upon an upright roller, or drum, standing at one end of the building, and as the artist completed his painting he thus disposed of it. Not having the time to spare, I could not stay to have all the immense cylinders unrolled for our inspection, for we were sufficiently occupied in examining that portion on which the artist is now engaged, and which is nearly completed, being from the mouth of the Red river to Grand Gulf. Any description of this gigantic undertaking that I should attempt in a letter, would convey but a faint idea of what it will be when completed. The remarkable truthfulness of the minutest objects upon the shores of the rivers, independent of the masterly style and artistical execution of the work, will make it the most valuable historical painting in the world, and

unequalled, for magnitude and variety of interest, by any work that has ever been heard of since the art of painting was discovered. As a medium for the study of geography of this portion of our country, it will be of inestimable value. The manners and customs of the aborigines and settlers—the modes of cultivating and harvesting the peculiar crops—cotton, sugar, tobacco, &c.—the shipping of the produce, in all the variety of novel and curious conveyances employed on these rivers for transportation, are here so vividly portrayed, that but a slight stretch of the imagination would bring the noise of the puffing steamboats from the river and the songs of the negroes in the fields, in music to the ear, and one seems to inhale the very atmosphere before him. Such were the impressions produced by our slight and unfavourable view of a portion of this great picture, which Banvard expects to finish this summer. It will be exhibited in New York in the autumn—after which, it will be sent to London, for the same purpose. The mode of exhibiting it is ingenious, and will require considerable machinery. It will be placed upon upright revolving cylinders, and the canvas will pass gradually before the spectator, thus affording the artist an opportunity of explaining the whole work. After examining many other beautiful specimens of the artist's skill, which adorned his studio, we dined together in the city. As our boat was now ready to start, I shook hands with Banvard, who parted from me with feelings as sad as they had been before joyful. His life has been one of curious interest, replete with stirring incidents, and I was greatly amused in listening to anecdotes of his adventures on these western rivers, where, for many years past, he has been a constant sojourner, indefatigably employed in preparing his great work.

WOODWORTH."

Banvard was a self-taught artist—no—he had a teacher. He went not to Rome indeed, to study the works of hands long since passed away ; but he studied the omnipresent works of the One Great Living Master!—Nature was his teacher. Many a time, at the close of a lovely summer's day, after

finishing his solitary evening meal, would he sit upon some lonely rock, near the margin of the noble river, where all was still, save the sweet chaunt of the feathered songsters of the adjacent forest, or the musical ripple of the eddying waters at his feet, and watch the majestic bluff as it gradually faded through the gray twilight from the face of day into the darker shades of night. Then would he turn and study the rising moon, as it peered above the opposite shore, ascending the deep blue ether, high in the heavens above, casting its mellow light over the surrounding landscape, and gilding the smooth surface of the river with its silvery hue. It was then and there he studied nature in its lonely grandeur, and seized those glowing moon-light scenes which now adorn his canvas, so vividly too, as if painted with a pencil dipped in the silvery beams of the living moon itself.

During the time this undaunted young man was transferring his drawings to the canvas, he had to practise the most rigid economy, lest his money should give out before the picture was completed. He could not afford to hire a menial assistant to do the ordinary labour about his paint-room ; and when the light of the day would recede from the canvas, upon which he was at work, instead of taking relaxation when the night came, he would be found grinding his colours, or splitting his wood for the ensuing day. Still, with all these self-denials and privations, his last cent was expended long before his last sketch was transferred to his last piece of canvas. He then endeavoured to get credit for a few pieces of this material, from a merchant of whom he had purchased the principal part for his painting, and with whom he had expended hundreds of dollars while speculating on the river, but in vain. Still, not discouraged, he laid his favourite project aside for a time, and sought other work. Fortunately, he obtained a small job to decorate regalia for a lodge of Odd Fellows, and with a light heart went cheerfully to work, to earn the money which would purchase the material to complete his picture. With the avails, he procured the needed canvas.

At last, his great project is finished! the Mississippi is painted! and his country now boasts the largest painting in the world! But the trials of our persevering artist were not all passed. The history of the first exhibition of this wonderful production is curious, and furnishes another illustration of the necessity there is, never to despair. The gas company of Louisville, before they would put up fixtures for him, compelled him to deposit *double* the price of such fixtures in their bank. To raise this amount, he *gave* a piece of philosophical apparatus to a society in the city, provided they bought fifty tickets in advance. They agreed to this, as they desired the apparatus very much, it being worth twice the amount they gave for the tickets. The city authorities also ordered him to pay a tax for exhibiting his work,—a work of which they ought to have been proud, and which would not only reflect honour upon the city, but make it noted throughout the civilised world.

The first night he opened his great picture for exhibition, in Louisville, not a single person thought it worth while to visit it. He received not a cent,—the night was rainy. The artist returned to his room with a sorrowful heart,—he sat down upon a box, and looked upon the blank wall, where, but a few days before, with high spirits and cheerful heart, he had put the finishing touch to his task of long years of toil and hope. His heart almost sank within him; but he did not despair. The next day he sallied out among the boatmen, by the river, and gave them tickets; telling them they must see it; that it was their river he had painted. At night the boatmen came, and with them a few of their friends. When they saw the accuracy of the painting, they were delighted, and their wild enthusiasm was raised as one well known object after another passed by them. The boatmen told the citizens it was a grand affair; that it was correctly delineated, and its accuracy could be relied upon. Finally, the public became convinced that the picture was really worth looking at, and then they rushed to see it by crowds.

The great artist left the city and went to New York and Boston, where admiring thousands upon thousands visited it, many coming hundreds of miles—from the remotest parts of the States—to view this wonderful production. Indeed, so great was the desire to see it, that the railroad companies ran express trains from adjacent towns into the city for the accommodation of the eager throngs who wished to view the greatest achievement of individual enterprise upon record. And in these cities our persevering young artist reaped the reward for his years of toil, for the public fully appreciated his great work.

He next set sail for London, where his enterprise and perseverance were duly commended and rewarded. The press was loud in his praise, and the excitement produced was even greater than in America. His room was daily crowded by the nobility and fashion of the Metropolis. Her Majesty, hearing of his wonderful production, commanded him to repair with it to Windsor Castle, where Her Majesty, His Royal Highness Prince Albert, and the royal family, honoured the artist by inspecting his beautiful work of art in the presence of a large and brilliant assemblage of the Court. At the close of the Exhibition, Her Majesty bestowed upon Mr. Banvard a distinguished mark of her royal approbation. And now our persevering artist is justly reaping a golden harvest. He has opened a new and useful field for the artist's pencil, and his genius and enterprise will be honoured, as Governor Briggs beautifully remarked, "so long as the great Father of Waters and its numerous tributaries continue to pour their flowing tides into the great ocean."

The European artists, struck with the magnificent conception of Banvard, were not tardy in profiting by the lesson he had taught them, and soon not only Europe but America was deluged with panoramas *à la Banvard* of every known quarter of the globe, and his imitators are legion.

Then, too, there were some base and unprincipled enough to pirate his picture, and numerous bare-faced copies were exhibited both in Europe and America, purporting to be the "great original." But Mr. Banvard exhibited his painting only in the cities of New York and Boston, and those who have seen an "original panorama of the Mississippi in any other town or city in America, have been the subject of imposition.

He now determined to visit the Holy Land; he entrusted his painting to the care of a trusty agent in Paris, where it was on "exposition" at the time he set out on a journey to Palestine; and the result is in the magnificent "PILGRIMAGE to the HOLY LAND. He still appeared to be the child of singular adventure, for on his voyage he was shipwrecked and lost every thing he had with him, save his life, while the Arabs robbed him of all his money. His vessel was struck by one of those death-riding simoons, which came sweeping over the waves from the great desert, tearing out the masts and sinking the craft instantaneously. Banvard clung to the upper deck, which floated, until the force of the hurricane was over, then succeeded in reaching the beach. Another vessel near them met the same fate, but unfortunately all on board were lost. He eventually reached Cairo, ascended the Nile into Nubia beyond the cataracts, then crossed the Arabian desert to Jerusalem, traveled throughout Palestine, and after many singular adventures procured the materials for the magnificent production of the Holy Land, now before us. Mr. Banvard owes it to the public to prepare his own biography, which he has promised, and when it appears, it will be one of the most interesting ever published.



# FAC SIMILE.

انتر صه سنا بمو فرتم ال بر العبه سنا تر زبر بكيه من فمسه لثو حى ال بدو اسكور از ر صبه  
 ر نمر و ال اكدت ان لفره الرر بنزرد علما اسر صي اس اف زيم و ب جمع تلك ابله و ح سبر  
 انفر و جللم جللم دل علل فمدر لمدت صبه صا و اف ر فبا و انا مبر صه من بكو كان عرقا  
 انجله باف و ر و فمهر الما لوز الفو صه سنا و ع و سر الما لوز صه حى اسعه و بالو كوا  
 صه سنا كين و فنانم بر شمع صه و ر و اسر و الشبه ذك لست نخرن ذ كحل و درنا صه كوز  
 و صه ال عرب ز جبه مع كوز صه سنا كوز و صه سنا كوز و صه سنا كوز و صه سنا كوز  
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## CERTIFICATE OF A NATIVE

TO THE FIDELITY OF

Mr. Banvard's Original Drawings.

### TRANSLATION.

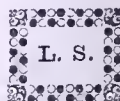
I HAVE repeatedly accompanied travelers for the last fifteen year, through Palestine and Egypt, acting as guide. In 1850, I attended Mr. John Banvard on a voyage up the Nile through Egypt, the Holy Land to the Dead Sea and the Jordan, during which time he made drawings of the scenery, the rivers, towns and cities, and to the accuracy and truthfulness of all which I hereby testify.



L. S.

HASSAN ISMAEEL.

Witness, IBRIHIM EFFENDI.



L. S.

Given this 20th day of the month Gamed-el Ekhil, in the year of the Hegira, 1267.

I hereby declare and attest that the above signature is the proper handwriting of Hassan Ismaeel, the guide who accompanied Mr. John Banvard through Palestine.

ANTONIUS AMEUNEY, *Translator for the United States Consulate at Beyrout.*



Certified before

J. HOSFORD SMITH,

*United States Consul for Syria and Palestine.*